

Korea's Changing National Story: Testing Theories of Inclusivity

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How do national identities evolve to be more inclusive? In the face of increasing immigration, many argue that South Korea's ethnic national story is bracing for a civic turn. Yet how do beliefs about national identity change at the citizen level? Building on works that highlight the multidimensionality of national identity, we argue that such change begins through a reweighting of existing elements that is spurred by real political pressures, rather than a transformation from old to new. Applying this framework to South Korea, we identify three distinct national stories—economic, political, and ethnic—that comprise Korean identity and use an experimental study to test which is most effective at increasing affinity toward an immigrant other. The findings have implications for democracies facing similar needs for national reimagination due to migration pressures or growing internal divisions.